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RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH IMMEDIATE 5767
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000324

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR EAP/K, EAP/MLS, ISN/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [UNSC](#) [PGOV](#) [KN](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: DPRK MISSILE LAUNCH: VIETNAM'S UN POSITION REMAINS
UNDECIDED

REF: A. STATE 32599
[B.](#) STATE 33031

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Classified By: Ambassador Michael Michalak. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Despite early indications that it would simply hew to China and Russia's line, Vietnam's position on a possible UN Security Council resolution in fact remains undecided. In an April 8 conversation, the MFA's International Organizations Official responsible for Security Council matters, Pham Hai Anh, emphasized two principles: 1) the need to adhere to UN Resolutions governing non-proliferation, including UNSCR 1718, and 2) the right of individual countries to the peaceful use of space. Anh declined, however, to state specifically how Vietnam would apply these general principles to the DPRK's April 5 missile launch, saying only that Vietnam's determination would depend on "the facts." Pressed further, Anh acknowledged that Vietnam's calculation was a political one as well, noting that Russia and China had a different interpretation than the one presented by the United States, Japan, South Korea, and others. Anh stressed that Vietnam had approached North Korea, both before the launch and after, to express concern; on April 7, the MFA again summoned the DPRK Ambassador to urge Pyongyang to make positive gestures to reassure the international community. All sides should exercise restraint, Anh said, stressing that whatever actions are taken should not jeopardize the Six-Party Talks.

[¶2.](#) (C) COMMENT: Vietnam's natural inclination will be to hide behind China and Russia's position. Still, we are encouraged, cautiously, by Vietnam's reserve and believe that high-level engagement could pry important space between Hanoi and Beijing/Moscow. At one point in the conversation, Anh said that Vietnam would welcome a more technical briefing from the United States on the launch. We think that such a briefing would be a useful opportunity to underscore the seriousness of the DPRK's actions, and could supplement more active diplomatic engagement at the senior levels. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

[¶3.](#) (C) On April 8, Deputy PolCouns met with the MFA's International Organizations Section Chief responsible for UN Security Council matters, Pham Hai Anh, to urge Vietnam to support meaningful UNSC action in response to the DPRK's April 5 launch of a Taepo-Dong 2 missile. DPolCouns

emphasized, per reftels, that the DPRK action represents clear violation of UNSCR 1718, DPRK claims that it was a peaceful satellite launch notwithstanding.

¶4. (C) In response, Anh emphasized that in considering its position, Vietnam would take into account two principles. First, Vietnam takes its non-proliferation obligations seriously, particularly those that stem from UNSC Resolutions such as UNSCR 1718. Second, however, Vietnam respects the right of member states to the peaceful use of space. Asked how Vietnam would apply these general principles to the DPRK's April 5 launch, which the United States and others believe constitutes exactly the type of ballistic missile activity proscribed by 1718, Anh declined to comment, saying only that Vietnam's determination had not yet been made and would depend on the "facts." Noting that there were differing interpretations of the launch, he said that Vietnam would welcome a more detailed technical briefing from the United States. Anh acknowledged that Vietnam faced a political calculation as well, with China/Russia on one side and the United States, Japan, and South Korea on the other.

¶5. (C) Anh was careful to note that Vietnam had expressed its concerns to North Korea both before the launch and after, most recently in an April 7 conversation between the MFA's Director General for International Organizations Le Hoai Trung and the DPRK Ambassador. During that meeting DG Trung urged North Korea to take steps to take measures to reassure the international community, according to Anh.

¶6. (C) Anh reiterated Vietnam's strong support for the Six-Party Talks, noting that the DPRK Ambassador bluntly stated that "a new resolution with sanctions would mean the

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end of the Six-Party process." Given this, Anh said that Vietnam was concerned that whatever action the Security Council takes not jeopardize the Six-Party Talks. He said that Vietnam is urging all sides to exercise restraint.

MICHALAK